

AEB2452: Agritourism and Food Systems

Quest 2

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Spring 2026
- MWF 8th period (3:00 - 3:50 pm) Location: Little Hall 0113

Instructor

- Misti Sharp, PhD
- 1189 McCarty Hall A
- Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesday from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, Thursdays from 1 – 2:30, and [by appointment](#)
- mistisharp@ufl.edu or 352-294-7632

Teaching Assistant

- Moyinoluwa Oriola, graduate student
- Office: 1129 McCarty Hall B
- Office Hours: Mondays from 4-5:30
- m.oriola@ufl.edu

Course Description

Agritourism and Food Systems explores the global disconnect between humans and the food, water, and natural resource systems on which we depend. Wicked problems such as food insecurity, climate change, and mass extinction abound leaving many hopeless about the future. Can we reconnect humanity with our natural world through international tourism? This class uses systems thinking and the fields of agribusiness, ecology, tourism, rural sociology, and economics to explore opportunities in agritourism across the world to reconnect humans with our agri-food-eco systems.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 2
- Social & Behavioral Sciences
- International

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Required Readings and Materials

- **Readings:** While there is no required textbook, readings are provided in the pages of eLearning for each module (e.g. Pages →View all Pages→Module 1: Introduction). You are expected to read all assigned readings in preparation for class discussions and participation quizzes. Readings, lectures, and class discussions form the basis of module assessments.
- **E-learning:** can be accessed via <http://elearning.ufl.edu> using your Gatorlink username and password. If you are having difficulties accessing E-learning, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk by calling (352)-392-HELP

or email helpdesk@ufl.edu. This will be where you submit some of your work and where I will post grades on a regular basis.

- **Canva Account:** Canva is a free online graphic design software. Most projects in this class may benefit from the design tools and templates in Canva. To sign up for Canva:
 - Open an internet browser and navigate to <https://www.canva.com/>.
 - Click on the Sign up for free and get started icon in the center of the page.
 - Sign in with Google or enter your email and create a password.
 - Click Agree and create my Account.
- **Office 365:** More specifically, this class will use Microsoft forms, powerpoint, one-note, etc which are all freely available to UF students and Faculty. To Install Microsoft Teams:
 - Open an internet browser and navigate to <https://cloud.it.ufl.edu/collaboration-tools/office-365/>
 - Click on *Teams* and then *Get the Windows App* if you have sufficient space. If you don't have sufficient space, simply choose "Use the web app instead."

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

Quizzes (200 points): There are 5 quizzes in this course worth 50 points each (one for each module). You may drop your lowest quiz score. The quizzes include both multiple-choice and open-ended questions and will be taken in the regular classroom during regular class time. Quiz dates are listed in the schedule. If you miss a quiz, it will be your dropped quiz.

Experiential Learning Assignments (400 points): Each module there will be a required experiential learning activity that you will have to participate in, produce a creative work for, and reflect on. Each of these assignments will be worth 100 points and your lowest scoring assignment may be dropped. See rubric in eLearning for more details on how the 100 points are distributed for each of these reflection assignments. Late work is accepted with a 10 point per day late penalty applied.

Cumulative Assignment (200 points): For the final course deliverable, you must plan an international excursion that is centered around agri-food-eco tourism. This must include a complete cost estimate including an environmental impact assessment. You must locally source all equipment, training, etc. required for a fulfilling experience. This excursion plan will be presented in the form of a travel booklet with a summary of all activities, links to websites, and all tables the figures must be properly cited. Within the plan, you should consider the needs of a typical American (bathroom access, 3 meals a day, etc) and market the excursion to Americans. This will not be accepted late for any reason.

Roundtable Assignment/Virtual Exchange (100 points): Agritourism is a market-based solution for environmental problems—that being said, how agritourism is implemented and impacts the environmental problem at hand differs widely across countries and cultures. To help us understand the nuances to the environmental problems and agritourism as a solution, you will participate in either a roundtable assignment or a virtual exchange where you will actively work towards understanding the perspectives of others. For the roundtable, you will discuss topics like sustainable gastrotourism in Malaysia or equine tourism in Kentucky. In the virtual exchange, you will engage with Croatian students to provide solutions to the rural exodus through agritourism development. More details about dates and activities are provided in eLearning.

Case Study (50 points): Agritourism is a diversification strategy used by a farm to increase economic viability while providing a variety of public goods including education, conservation, and preservation. This semester the class will grapple with a problem facing a local farm and help provide analysis and clarity as to how the farm may not only survive, but also flourish within the current environment. More details about technical requirements will be provided in eLearning. There will be an in-class component to this assignment.

Participation and Reflection (50 points): The learning cycle has four components: experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting (Kolb 1984). As such, this course is designed to engage you all in four of those components each time we meet. You will read the readings each class, come to class to participate in discussions and activities, and maintain a high level

of engagement and participation during the entire class. Participation (either through a reading quiz, activity or an exit ticket) will be graded based on the following rubric and will be updated daily based on class participation. If you are absent, you will receive a zero for participation for the day.

Participation Rubric

	High Quality-100%	Average-75%	Needs Improvement-50%
Informed: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.			
Thoughtful: Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised.			
Considerate: Takes the perspective others into account.			

Grade Composition

Component	Points	% of Grade
Module Quizzes (best 4 of 5)	200 points (50 points each)	20%
Roundtable Assignment/Virtual Exchange	100 points	10%
Case Study	50 points	5%
Cumulative Assignment	200 points	20%
Experiential Learning/Field Trip Reflections (best 4 of 5)	400 points (100 points each)	40%
Participation	50 points (daily)	5%
Total	1000 points	100%

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76.9%
A-	90 – 93.9%		C-	70 – 73.9%
B+	87 – 89.9%		D+	67 – 69.9%
B	84 – 86.9%		D	64 – 66.9%
B-	80 – 83.9%		D-	60 – 63.9%
C+	77 – 79.9%		E	<60

III. Module topics and due dates

See an up-to-date schedule on eLearning within Module pages

Module 1: Are we disconnected from nature?

Everyone eats food, lives in shelters, and wears clothing made from natural materials provided predominately by our rural communities. Nevertheless, our rural communities are troubled by poor access to services and struggle to make ends meet. This module explores what is meant by the term “family farm” or “subsistence farming” in the US and around the world.

Lecture Topics:

- 1) Human disconnect from nature
- 2) Urbanization
- 3) Farming domestically and internationally

Assignments:

- Experiential Learning Assignment #1 (Nature Journaling) due on Monday, January 26th
- Roundtable #1 (Land Use in Florida) due on Friday, January 30th
- Quiz #1 due on Monday, February 2nd

Module 2: How do we allocate our scarce natural and social resources?

Agriculture is all around us and yet there seems to be a disconnect between consumers and the food that they eat. In many ways, food has become polarized as we consider what, how, and how much food to eat. Economics provides a lens to understand why producers and consumers are often at odds but also provides an opportunity to overcome market failure.

Lecture Topics:

- 1) Food market polarization
- 2) Economics and markets
- 3) Market failure and policy intervention

Assignments:

- Experiential Learning Assignment #2 (Food Market Comparison) due on Monday, February 9th
- Roundtable #2 (Hawaii Coffee Tourism) due on Wednesday, February 18th
- Quiz #2 due on Friday, February 20th

Module 3: What role do environmental and cultural values have in our food system?

All food systems begin in a local context but not all food is destined to stay in that community. When food is produced at scale, it becomes largely disconnected from this local context and yet, locally grown food provides an anchor for a community to thrive. This module differentiates between a food system and a sustainable food system and highlights the role of culture and policy in our food system functioning.

Lecture Topics:

- 1) Food systems versus supply chains
- 2) Food Insecurity and Obesity
- 3) Sustainable Food Systems

Assignments:

- Experiential Learning Assignment #3 (Field and Fork Gardens) due on Monday, March 2nd
- Roundtable #3 (Make America Healthy Again) due on Monday, March 9th
- Quiz #3 due on Wednesday, March 11th

Module 4: How do we scale local, sustainable food systems with marketing and management?

We take a closer look at the impacts of locally grown food and consider why our food system is the way that it is. To overcome the challenges for “small” or “local” agriculture, some market structures such as community supported agriculture (CSA), farmer’s markets, and farm to table events have risen to increase the profitability of LGF. These unique market structures will be discussed in detail making comparisons in these market structures (short supply chain) to “traditional” food market structure (long supply chain).

Lecture Topics:

- 1) Market models for farm diversification
- 2) A case for agritainment and education
- 3) Marketing and management for a thriving food system

Assignments:

- Experiential Learning Assignment #4 (Spring Festival) due on Monday, March 30th
- Roundtable #4 (Kentucky Derby) due on Friday, April 3rd
- Quiz #4 due on Monday, April 6th

Module 5: Can tourism provide an opportunity to address problems in our food system?

The planet is full of wonders that are magnificent to see—but there is always the concern that people are doing things solely for profit without consideration of the larger impacts of their decisions on local, regional, and global ecosystems. This module draws a distinction between tourism and sustainable tourism highlighting issues related to wildlife, animal welfare, local development, preservation of culture, and social responsibility.

Lecture Topics:

- 1) Agritourism as an eco-innovation strategy
- 2) Sustainable agri and ecotourism
- 3) Wildlife conservation and corporate social responsibility

Assignments:

- Experiential Learning Assignment #5 (Agritourism Website) due on Wednesday, April 15th
- Roundtable #5 (Gastrotourism in Malaysia) due on Friday, April 17th
- Roundtable #6 (Ecotourism in Africa) due on Monday, April 20th
- Quiz #5 due on Wednesday, April 22nd

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) learning outcomes as follows:

<p>Content: <i>Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).</i></p>	
<p>Define agritourism, ecotourism and gastro tourism domestically and internationally.</p> <p>Identify characteristics of social ecological systems domestically and internationally.</p> <p>Define a sustainable food system and identify challenges in achieving a sustainable food system</p> <p>Create a budget for an agri-eco-gastro tourism excursion in an international context utilizing as many local resources as possible and minimizing environmental degradation.</p> <p>Achieved through lectures, readings, weekly assignments, and the final excursion presentation.</p>	<p>N, S</p>
<p>Critical Thinking: <i>Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).</i></p>	
<p>Create mental models that capture the complexity and hope within our social-ecological-systems to solve some of the biggest problems facing humanity.</p> <p>Contribute to a roundtable discussion on a wicked problem related to our food and/or ecosystems.</p> <p>Achieved through module assignments and class discussions/readings.</p>	<p>S</p>
<p>Communication: <i>Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).</i></p>	
<p>Communicate avenues of progress for a wicked problem and relate to diverse perspectives relevant to a problem in an international context.</p> <p>Reflect on excursions and connect experiences to the course material in a written format</p> <p>Make presentations about experiences, phenomena, and plans in both formal (presentations) and informal (class discussion) ways.</p> <p>Achieved through module assignments, reflection journals, and final excursion report.</p>	<p>N, S</p>
<p>Connection: <i>Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.</i></p>	
<p>Engage with our natural and agri-food system by taking excursions and reflecting on these experiences.</p> <p>Incorporate readings from the course into creative works and intellectual discourse.</p> <p>Achieved through participating and reflecting on at least 4 of the experiential learning opportunities and participating in classroom discussions/assignments.</p>	<p>S</p>
<p>N – International Designation -- this designation is always in conjunction with another program area. Courses with International should demonstrate that a majority of the course addresses International content and engagement and it should be a substantial, defining feature of the course. International courses promote the development of students' global and intercultural awareness. Students examine the cultural, economic, geographic, historical, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world, and thereby comprehend the trends, challenges, and opportunities that affect communities around the world. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understanding of an increasingly connected world.</p>	

S – Social and Behavioral Sciences Designation -- Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe, and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes, or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

V. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

Module 1 Experiential Learning Reflection: Attempt to reconnect with nature and your food system by visiting a local farmer’s market, farm stand, garden, park, or natural venue. Once there, participate in “nature journaling” where you should attempt to “reconnect with nature” by noting all sensory input (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound). Next think about how others in a country of interest to you might engage with nature and their food system. Find a video about this experience and again, participate in “nature journaling” for the virtual field trip. Finally, compare and contrast the experience you had with the experience you think someone in another country might have had. A set of discussion questions will be provided online. You will need to submit your journal entries and the discussion responses for full credit.

Module 2 Experiential Learning Reflection: Visit an international market and a typical market in your local community and prepare a [food budget](#) for a meal made with ingredients from both stores. Take pictures of the location (including at least one photo with you in it) that illustrate the kinds of food and pricing structures of the location. Reflect on the experience and why you think that the experiences at the two shops are both similar and different. More details will be provided on eLearning including a grading rubric.

Module 3 Experiential Learning Reflection: Visit the UF Field and Fork Gardens and create a self-guided tour of the garden that is oriented towards a special interest such as pollinators, sustainable production, global foods, mindfulness/mental health tour, bat tour (night), etc. Use [canva](#) or another visual platform to provide an overview of the tour and then go into details about each of the items that they will see/experience in the garden (see for example, the [UF self-guided tour](#) or [Austin self-guided tours](#)—although our bats are better than their bats!). Finally, reflect on the garden as a resource for the campus community and how it plays an important role in the sustainability of the UF food system. More details will be provided on eLearning including a grading rubric.

Module 4 Experiential Learning Reflection: Attend and reflect on an agritourism experience in Gainesville or elsewhere in Florida. Gainesville options include [Amber Brooks Farm](#), [Coon Hollo](#), or [Crossroads Farm and Apiary](#). Reflect on how the agritourism offerings display local culture, traditions, and agriculture. Create a brochure that highlights the opportunities available to you at this venue with pictures that you took at the event. More details will be provided on eLearning including a grading rubric.

Module 5 Experiential Learning Reflection: Either by yourself or with one or two of your peers, use Google Sites to create a website for a fictional Agri or Ecotourism operation that actively addresses a wicked problem in a community near and dear to your heart(s). This can be locally or internationally, but you should know enough about the local culture, agricultural, and natural amenities to have a meaningful experience for others. You should also make your operation as sustainable and embedded within the local context as possible. More details will be provided on eLearning including a grading rubric.

VI. Required Policies

<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabusolicies>